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Search for ^(Col.) James Hubbert (Hubbard/Hubard, Hobbleurt); in Adams Co. in 1811 (deposition for N.C. Supreme Court, taken at house of John Wood with Samuel Brooks, J.P.), left TN after 1785, reappeared in Adams Co. TN, ca. 1820 (1816). In jail (?)

Research Journal

Date	Activity	Results
5/1/89 (Pascagoula)	looked at <u>Early Inhabitants of the Natchez District</u> , Norman E. Billis (1963). p. 51: Inhabitants of the Natchez District - 1810 (Tax list for Adams Co. Hubbard, Asa Jefferson Co. WM 221 WM 221 WF 3 5 1 p. 80: Inhabitants of the Natchez District - 1816 Hubbard, Asa Jefferson Co.	James Hubbert not found in this source
	Examined <u>First Settlers of the Mississippi Territory</u> , Frances Terry Arguine (n.d.). (Gives data from the American State Papers - Class VIII, Public Lands, Volume I, 1789-1809) Mississippi Court Records, 1794-1835 J. Getelle Stewart King, G.P.C., Baltimore (1935) reprint of 1936 ed.	No James Hubbert
	<u>The Natchez Court Records, 1767-1805. Abstracts of Early Records</u> , Mary Wilson McNeal, G.P.C., Baltimore (1979). Orig. pub. 1913, Greenwood, MS.	No James Hubbert listed.
	<u>Adams County the Personal Tax Rolls</u> Roll # 159/ 1802 1805 1807 1808 (arranged by letter of alphabet) 1810 1812 1814 1815 1817	nothing " " Both Samuel Brooks & John Wood listed in 1807 tax list. no James Hubbert " " " " " "
	So, it seems that if James Hubbert were in Adams County in this time frame, he had no taxable property.	
	<u>Mississippi Territory & State Census Records</u> (Roll # 54) Spanish Census of 1792 1816 Adams Co. (heads of families) etc. 1818 " " " "	Not examined No James Hubbert "
	Leon S. Hollingsworth Genealogical Card File	nothing

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East Tennessee Historical Society

500 W. Church Avenue • Knoxville, Tennessee 37902 • 615/523-0781

April 24, 1989

Linday L. Posey
Jackson-George Regional Library
3214 Pascagoula St.
Pascagoula, MS 39567

Dear Linda,

It was nice to see you. You look so well, Mississippi certainly must agree with you.

Enclosed is a copy of the Smoky Mountain Historical Society Newsletter with the article about James Hubbert/Hubbard. I am not related to this family in any way but am very interested in what happened to old Col. James Hubbert. You will find that if he signed his name, it was spelled Hubbert, but if by others, it is often spelled Hubbard/Hubard, Hob(b)art.

Pages 81-83 give the story of his mysterious disappearance from Tennessee. Little is known of him during this time. I stated in the article that the James Hubbard in Conecuh Co, AL might be the same James Hubbert, but I now lean to the opinion that it is a different one. There was a David Hubbard in the same area as JH's descendants, but if there is any relationship, it is much further back. They are not the same family.

Since I wrote the article, I have a new piece of information. It came from (of all people) Pollyanna Creekmore. She read my article and then came in with a thick sheaf of papers and read me bits and pieces and then when I asked if I could look at them, she said, "No, can't let you see them," and left! I wanted to tackle her!! But I outsmarted her. I managed to see enough of the paper while she was holding it to read that it was from the North Carolina Supreme Court and I got the case number. It took me several months and we had to hire a researcher, but I finally got copies of the depositions, and they turned out to be a goldmine. Pollyanna still comes in periodically and dangles the "carrot" in front of me. I always let her think I am interested, but I have never told her I have them already. Knowing Pollyanna as you do, I know you can appreciate this account.

Anyway, one of the depositions was made by Col. James Hubbert who was then in Adams County, Mississippi Territory. It was made at the house of John Wood, with Samuel Brooks as justice of the peace. This is the first clue we have ever had that he was in that area. If you have anyone who is familiar with Adams County research who could advise me, I would very much appreciate it. It is not certain but I believe he was back with his son in Rhea County, TN by 1816 or so. 1811

The main things I need to know from Mississippi would be any info available on James Hubbert in Adams County. The other thing would be any info that could be turned up on the arrest story. I do not believe he was in jail for 15 years, but I do believe he was in jail. Perhaps it wasn't Louisiana territory, but Alabama or Mississippi. Would there be any court records from the period? Where might we find a copy, if it exists, of the petition to gain his release. I rather think

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that his son Benjamin would have gone through local authorities to petition for the release, rather than doing so himself. I mean, John Sevier or some such prominent person would have a much greater chance to win his release than a nobody such as Benjamin Hubbert. But this is all speculation.

ANY scrap of info or any suggestions for possible research will be greatly appreciated.

Enclosed is the information on the Rhea County books I spoke of. So many of the Sevier County people who went to Alabama first moved to Roane or Rhea County and then down into Alabama. None of my people did this, but I have noticed the trend with other families.

We will send you a copy of the third volume of Jefferson County cemeteries as soon as it is ready. But it will be a while.

Thanks for any advice you can give me on the old Colonel.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cherel".

Cherel Henderson



Smoky Mountain Historical Society



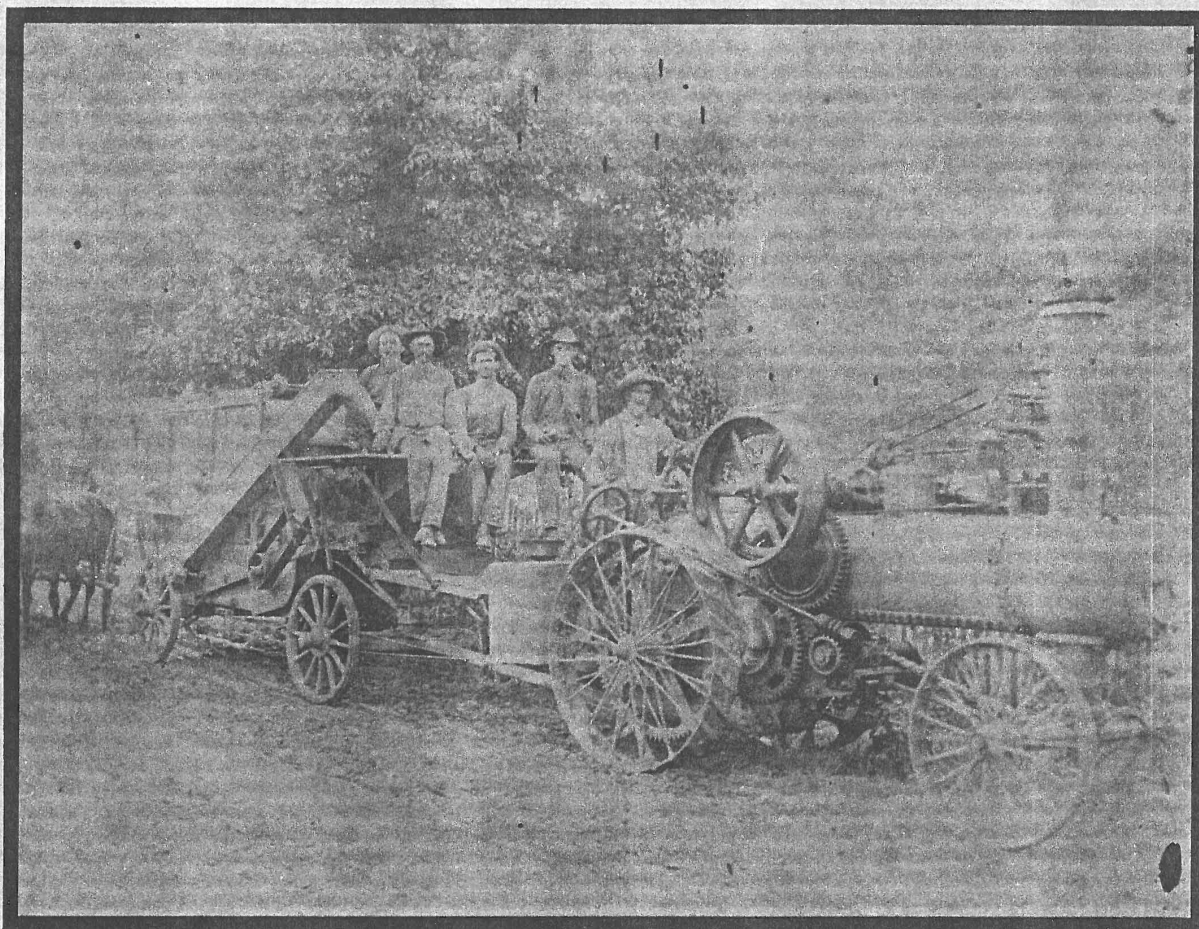
NEWSLETTER

Serving the Tennessee Counties of Blount, Cocke, and Sevier

VOLUME XIII, NO. 3

FALL, 1987

\$2.00



Steam Tractor
Owned by Ulysses (Uly) Edward
Underwood
Circa 1900

Photo Courtesy of Stella Underwood

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SMOKY MOUNTAIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETINGS

The Smoky Mountain Historical Society meets six times a year. In January, March, July and November we meet in the Sevier County Senior Citizens Center in Sevierville at 2 p.m. In May and September we have a covered-dish picnic. The locations for the picnic meetings vary. We will keep you informed of these through local newspapers. All six meetings are on the third Sunday of the month in which they occur. Visitors are welcome.

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1987 - 1989

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Membership dues for the SMHS are \$7.50 per year, or \$14.00 for two years. All members receive the SMHS NEWSLETTER, published four times a year. The membership year runs from January to December. Dues paid before November will be counted for the current year. Mail membership fees to the Smoky Mountain Historical Society, P.O. Box 286, Sevierville, TN 37862.

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JAMES HUBBERT (1742-1824)

SEVIER COUNTY'S PARADOXICAL PIONEER

by Chere! Bolin Henderson

To the redman his name carried terror and dread, but to fellow settlers on the frontier he was a hero and a respected ally. To Federal authorities charged with keeping peace with the Indians, he was a vexation and a bother, yet John Sevier considered him a friend and compatriot, describing him as "possessed of [a] manly and soldierly spirit." His penchant for pursuing the redman at any price earned for him the nickname "The Fool Warrior," but Governor William Blount had such faith and trust in his leadership abilities and judgment that he appointed him as a major in the Territorial militia. This paradoxical frontiersman, at once villain and hero, is James Hubbert, the forgotten man in Sevier County history.

Though he figured prominently in its early history, when the names of the county's early settlers are called, the name of James Hubbert is seldom among them. Perhaps area historians have wished to distance our county from his reputation as an Indian hater. Perhaps it is simply because he left the area so early that few people know he ever lived here. It has been almost 175 years since a Hubbert descendant, bearing his surname, has made Sevier County his home.

Yet his contributions to the settlement of the county, indeed of the region, are significant and should be realized. His name was a household word on the border, and many were the tales of his exploits. He was one of the very first settlers in what is now Sevier County, coming here certainly by 1783 while it was Greene County, North Carolina, and likely earlier while it was Washington County. He invested in several large tracts of land. He was a major in the militia and a staunch supporter of Governor John Sevier and the State of Franklin. He fought in the Revolution at the Battle of Guilford Courthouse (where a cut from an enemy saber left a permanent scar on his face) and alongside John Sevier at the Battle of Kings Mountain. His greatest fame came as an Indian fighter. He was at the Battle of Boyds Creek, and it has been said that after the Revolution he and Sevier fought in all the same Indian campaigns but one -- and Sevier missed that one!

Yes, the story of James Hubbert is one of triumph and achievement. But, as we shall see, it is also a story of tragedy and failure.

* * * * *

It was a pristine world, scarcely touched by the white man at the time James Hubbert built a cabin for his family (1782-83) on the north bank of the French Broad River in present-day Sevier County. An early traveler to the area described the river as being clear, the land "very fertile," and the forests, "even on the highest mountains...very thick and good." Game was plentiful. Hawks and eagles soared majestically against the sky. The traveler remarked that wild geese and swans were so numerous he could hardly sleep for their flapping about.

The scenic French Broad flows through some lovely land, but none is more pleasing to the eye than the stretch Hubbert chose. From his plantation he could view rock bluffs, timbered ridges, and flat plains stretching to the clear French Broad. On the opposite bank flat river bottom land gave way in the distance to hills and ridges, and finally to layer upon layer of hazy blue mountains lining the horizons.

But the beauty and pureness were deceptive; it was a world fraught with danger. Little more than a decade before, the first white settlers had moved into the upper edge of present-day Tennessee. Each advancing step of civilization met with the resistance of nature and the relentless opposition of the Indians.

James Hubbert was no stranger to Indian atrocity. Back in Virginia members of his family had been brutally massacred by Shawnees, and young Hubbert's grief and shock hardened into a hatred for all red men. So intense was this enmity that it was to affect the rest of his life, his reputation, and his place in history.

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James Hubbert was the Lewis Wetzel, the "Death Wind" of the old Southwest. Early historian J.G.M. Ramsey described him as "Courageous in action, ardent in pursuit, artful in strategie and desperate in his revenges..."

Judge S. C. Williams, in his HISTORY OF THE LOST STATE OF FRANKLIN, commented: "Every sector of the frontier, whether at the northwest or the southwest, produced a clearly marked type, the Indian Hater, such as James Hubbard and John Kirk. Usually he was a man who had suffered agony of the soul in the blotting out of loved ones at the hands of the savages. That agony hardened into a spirit of revenge that bordered on monomania."

If ever a man fitted the time and the place into which he was born, it was James Hubbert. For all his hatred of the Indians he was a respected leader among his fellow settlers. His courage, fortitude, and willingness to face danger and uncertainty were traits admired and needed on the frontier. Having seen firsthand the savagery and the cruelty of the Indians, the pioneers were glad to have a man of Hubbert's caliber on their side.

D. R. Kennedy, grandson of General Daniel Kennedy of the State of Franklin, knew Hubbert personally and had nothing but praise for his skills as a marksman and Indian fighter. In the 1880's Kennedy corresponded with Lyman Draper and these letters are preserved in the Draper Manuscripts. In the last years of his life, Hubbert lived near D. R. Kennedy's father in Rhea County, Tennessee. From the stories Kennedy related, he must have spent many childhood hours listening to James Hubbert, or the "Old Colonel," as he called him. Kennedy wrote, "As to the Old Col[onel] he was a man expert in firearms, such a marksman I have never seen before nor since. It made no difference with what position his prey occupied -- running, flying, or any other motion. At the twinkling of an eye the old marksman brought it down. I know what I saw with my own eyes, his feats in killing game. He was a terror to man, his enemies, whom they knew was a dead shot and never failed. He killed 35 Indians according to his own declaration which was not disputed by those who knew him, but too crafty to be destroyed he continued his warfare[.]

An early firsthand account of Hubbert's hostility toward the Indians and his mistrust of North Carolina Indian agent, Joseph Martin, is found in the diary of Moravian missionary Martin Schneider. A cold, wintery New Years Day, 1784, found Schneider in present-day Sevier County traveling along the French Broad River as he journeyed to meet with Col. Joseph Martin in the Indian towns on the Little Tennessee River. Hubbert's plantation, an oasis of civilization in the vast wilderness where settlers were few and the distance between plantations often great, beckoned to the cold, weary traveler with a promise of warmth and fellowship. Doubtlessly most visitors to the Hubbert home were greeted with frontier hospitality, as was Schneider until he revealed the purpose of his mission. Hubbert questioned him thoroughly about his business with Col. Martin, and though obviously dissatisfied with the answers, nevertheless bid him a "forced civil farewell." The missionary had gone scarcely a hundred steps before Hubbert angrily called him back, saying that he must know his business better, as no one went to Col. Martin with good intentions. Schneider wrote, "I did all I could to pacify him, and assured him that I knew nothing at all of their land affairs, whereby I brought it at last so far that he dispatched me with some curses." He went on to say that Hubbert and many others were such strong enemies of Col. Martin that he had "reason to be very much on his guard on his journeys." Martin, who had an Indian wife and family in addition to a white wife and children, was strongly disliked by the settlers who felt he often took the side of North Carolina and the Indians as opposed to the struggling frontiersmen.

A story related by D. R. Kennedy, as told by Hubbert himself, took place in our own Sevier County. Once Hubbert had been away from his home on the French Broad for a few days, leaving his wife Elizabeth alone with the children. It was a time

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of uneasy peace between the settlers and the Cherokees, with neither side strictly obeying "due to old feuds." Upon his return, Elizabeth told him that for some time she had heard a turkey gobbling up on the ridge behind their home. The next morning Hubbert took his gun, "Long Nance," and started up river opposite the direction his wife had pointed. Craftily he doubled back, taking care to always keep the gobbler between him and the house. Hubbert came in behind the sound. After close stalking he discovered an Indian in a tree, still gobbling, his gun resting on a limb and pointed toward Hubbert's cabin where his wife and children waited. He leveled Long Nance, fired, and the "gobbler" fell from the tree. After concealing his victim, he walked back down the ridge to his cabin. Elizabeth, who had heard the shot, asked, "What did you kill, Jimmy?"

"A damn old gobbler not fit to eat," was his laconic reply.

Hubbert found himself in trouble with authorities over the killing of the Indian Butler. Ramsey's ANNALS OF TENNESSEE gives a detailed version of the incident, as well as an insightful look into Hubbert's personality. Once, during an encounter with Butler, Hubbert had unseated him from his horse, causing him to lose honor among his people. Later, during a lull of hostility between the whites and Indians, Hubbert and a companion took goods to the Indian nation to exchange for food that was badly needed on the frontier. Butler, hearing of their approach, armed himself and a fellow warrior and hastened to find Hubbert. When Butler approached, Hubbert and his friend were on foot, leisurely leading their horses. Butler rode directly up and demanded to know the purpose of the visit. Hubbert, looking at him sternly, replied with great self-possession, "As the war is over, we have brought some clothing which we desire to barter for corn." He took a bag from the saddle and allowed the Indians a look. He also took out a bottle of whiskey and offered them a drink. To further show his peaceable intentions, he leaned his rifle against a tree. Showing an "insolent indifference" to Hubbert's attempt to keep the peace, Butler remained mounted and attempted to ride between Hubbert and his gun. Hubbert, however, stepped closer to the gun. The air was tense as the two antagonists faced each other in wary silence. Hubbert knew that to take up his rifle would be seen as a breach of the armistice and would bring the wrath of the Indians on a starving frontier. But he also knew that to remain unarmed meant his certain death. In an attempt to avoid either, he reached for the muzzle of his gun, but allowed the breach to remain on the ground. Then, "assuming a look of stern defiance," he braced himself for the attack he was certain would come.

Butler attempted to strike Hubbert but gained no advantage. Then he rapidly leveled his gun and fired a ball, grazing Hubbert's ear and head. Though no injury was done, Hubbert was slightly stunned. The two Indians quickly rode away and had gone about 80 yards when Hubbert shot, hitting Butler in the back and knocking him from his horse. Butler begged Hubbert not to harm him, as he was dying anyway. He asked to be set against a tree. Hubbert did this, then demanded to know whether the Indians were for peace or war. Butler insisted the Indians were for war and would scalp the settlers. He became very emphatic and offensive and continued to provoke Hubbert with "insulting expletives." Hubbert finally became so enraged that he "dispatched" the Indian with a blow from his heavy gun.

North Carolina Governor Martin, fearing new Indian outbreaks because of the incident, wrote to General John Sevier, saying he had been informed that Major Hubbert had murdered Butler "without provocation," and he ordered Col. Joshua Gist to arrest Hubbert and take him to Burke Gaol for security. There is no evidence this was ever done. Joshua Gist was a friend and a near neighbor of Hubbert. Moreover, Hubbert had the support of the people and of Sevier, who responded thusly to Gov. Martin:

"This we know, that all the proof was had against Hubbard that ever can be had, which is, the Indian first struck, and then discharged his gun at Hubbard, before the Indian was killed by Hubbard. As Governor Martin reprobates the measure in so great a degree, I can't pretend to say what

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he might have done, but must believe that had any other person met with the same insult from one of those bloody savages, who have so frequently murdered the wives and children of the people of this country for many years past, I say had they been possessed of that manly and soldierly spirit that becomes an American, they must have acted like Hubbard."

D. R. Kennedy heard the Butler story from the Old Colonel himself. He says the incident began when Hubbert, while traveling south of the French Broad, met up with Butler. They agreed to share a meal and Butler offered as his fare some frozen dumplings, while Hubbard took out his brisket of venison. They had only begun to eat when "malice got ahead of his appetite," and Butler, jumping to his feet, threw a frozen dumpling which hit Hubbert's upper lip, leaving a bad cut. (Kennedy remembered seeing the scar.) Butler ran to his pony, "laid whip," and had gone at full speed a full thirty yards before Hubbert's shot brought him to the ground. Hubbert went to the Indian and raised him up. Butler "died hard." It was the first time, Kennedy recalled, that he had ever heard Hubbert express any sorrow or feeling for a red victim.

By his own declaration, Hubbert claimed to have killed 35 Indians. It is not clear if this number included those killed in battles or simply those killed in one-on-one fights. In most cases he could claim just cause -- either he or his family was in danger, or the Indian struck first. But other instances are more difficult to explain. It must be kept in mind that we do not know all of the circumstances surrounding these incidents and, as with all traditions, facts often are left out, embellished, or altered through the years of retelling (as with the two different accounts of the Butler killing).

One such incident concerns the killing of Old Tassel and other friendly Indians who, under a flag of truce, came to meet with the whites. The following version of the story was related by Haywood in 1823 in his HISTORY OF TENNESSEE and has been repeated by major historians since, including Ramsey and Williams. The John Kirk family lived on the southwest side of Little River in present-day Blount County. One day while John Kirk, Sr., and his son, John, Jr., were away from home, Slim Tom, an Indian with whom the family was well acquainted and had always treated kindly, came to the home and asked for food. After Mrs. Kirk gave him food he soon disappeared into the woods, only to reappear a short time later with a group of Indians who fell upon the family and massacred all eleven of them. The elder Kirk returned home to find his family dead and their bodies lying in the yard.

Several hundred settlers under the command of John Sevier prepared to take revenge for the merciless killings. Indian towns were burned and many Indians killed and taken prisoner. According to Haywood, one day while John Sevier was away from the camp, James Hubbert invited six or seven friendly, peaceful Indians, including Old Tassel and Abraham, to the camp for a talk. The Indians came under a flag of truce and were put into a house. Those present allowed young John Kirk, with Hubbert at his side, to enter the house. Hubbert supposedly stood by and watched as Kirk tomahawked to death the defenseless Indians.

This tragedy came at a time when the collapse of the State of Franklin was eminent, and Governor John Sevier was besieged on all sides by those seeking his downfall. His enemies lost no time in exploiting the incident, accusing him of a deliberate absence so the act could take place. On 27 November 1788 the North Carolina Assembly voted on an act to pardon all Franklinites who were willing to take an oath of allegiance to the North Carolina government, but an amendment was offered to exclude John Sevier from the pardon. Letters and depositions were written in Sevier's defense, apparently in an effort to remove any stain of the killing of Old Tassel and Abraham from his reputation. These firsthand accounts, written within months of the actual happening, differ markedly from the Haywood version which was written almost 50 years later.

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On October 17, 1788, John Kirk wrote to John Watts, chief warrior of the Cherokee Nation, saying that he was wrong to blame Sevier for the Indians' deaths. He went on to say:

"Listen now to my story. For days and months the Cherokee Indians, big and little, women and children, have been fed and treated kindly by my mother. When all was at peace with the Tennessee towns, Slim Tom with a party of Sattigo and other Cherokee Indians, murdered my mother, brothers, and sisters in cold blood, when children just before were playful about them as friends; at the instant some of them received the bloody tomahawk they were smiling in their faces. This began the war; and since I have taken ample satisfaction can now make peace except for Slim Tom. Our beloved men, the Congress, tells us to be at peace; I will listen to their advice if no more blood is shed by the Cherokees, and the headmen of your nation take care to prevent such beginnings of bloodshed in all time to come. But if they do not, your people may feel something more to keep up remembrance of,

John Kirk, Jun.
Captain of the Bloody Rangers."

October 25, 1788, James Hubbert and Nathaniel Evans appeared before Alexander Outlaw, justice of the peace for Greene County, North Carolina, and swore that they were present when Old Tassel and Old Abraham and the Dark Night were killed, and that it was contrary to John Sevier's orders and that it was done by a certain John Kirk, whose mother and six brothers and sisters had been killed a few days before. Also according to this deposition, Kirk was protected by a party that rose contrary to Sevier's orders and "directed the said Kirk to do as he pleased."

Sworn statements were made on the same day by John McMahan and James Mahan, and Benjamin Mooney, saying the incident began when some of the militiamen were shooting at a house across the river where the Indian Abraham lived. Abraham and another Indian hoisted a flag of truce and came across the river to the militia encampment. Sevier spoke with the Indians, shook hands with them and then sent the canoe back across the river for Old Tassel and one other Indian.

Thinking the Indians safe, he left camp to gather some of his army. In his absence a certain Robert Pearce, his gun cocked, ordered Craig to clear the way or he "would make daylight shine through him." Craig responded that Gov. Sevier had ordered him to protect the Indians and he would do so. Pearce then told Craig that if he would go after the governor, he would see that the Indians were not harmed, provided he wasn't gone too long. Craig left to find Sevier, but before either of them returned the guard gave way, and John Kirk entered the house and killed the Indians.

Sevier, upon his return, was very much affected by the tragedy that had taken place. He criticized the barbarity of putting to death prisoners who had submitted to their mercy, saying such conduct scandalized a Christian nation and would bring a curse upon a country which would be guilty of such cruelty. The army then brought in Charles Murphy, a half-breed, who a number of the men immediately wanted to put to death. Sevier begged any of the men who had any regard for him, for God's sake not to allow Murphy to be harmed. The half-breed was set free by Sevier. This upset the whole army and some murmured against Sevier, saying, "It would be well done to kill any man that would save an Indian."

Careful research into these depositions, official correspondence, North Carolina records, and the Draper Manuscripts has failed to find Hubbert's name mentioned in any way with the killing of these Indians, and they offer no evidence that he was involved. Haywood, writing nearly 50 years after the incident, seems to be the earliest source for naming Hubbert as Kirk's accomplice. Ramsey, in his 1853 account, offers nothing new, but quotes Haywood word for word. Could it be that Ramsey's considerable research could shed no new light on the subject?

Historians through the years have used the accounts given by Haywood and Ramsey. J. P. Brown's version in OLD FRONTIERS even goes so far as to quote

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Hubbert as saying to John Kirk as he hands him the tomahawk, "Take the revenge to which you are entitled." A check of original sources cited in his footnotes does not justify the use of this quote. Again, the original sources do not even mention the name of James Hubbert.

It is evident from firsthand accounts that Sevier, not James Hubbert, was responsible for the Indians' presence in camp. Eyewitnesses to the scene described the events in great detail, right down to naming the guard at the door and the man who threatened his life if he did not let Kirk enter. Had Hubbard played the role with which he was credited by Haywood, is it not likely that he would have been named by these men?

Given his known hatred for all Indians, it would be difficult to imagine his leading a fight to save the prisoners, but perhaps he was no more guilty than the many others present who either actively supported Kirk, or at the very least passively stood by and allowed the killing to take place. Perhaps the real significance of this story as regards Hubbert is that his reputation as an Indian hater was so well established that this dark blot on the history of the frontier would be credited to him regardless of the facts.

It is difficult for us today to understand how such a tragedy could have taken place and how these frontiersmen we have come to regard as heroes could be capable of such dark deeds. But safe and comfortable in our modern homes we have not had to come face-to-face with these dangers. When a massacre took place there was no policeman, coroner, or paramedic to call. The settlers took care of and buried their own, and the sights they witnessed must have wrenched their insides and made the blood run cold -- victims -- men, women, and children -- scalped, disemboweled, hearts cut out, heads and limbs severed. Perhaps James Robertson, a pioneer on the frontiers of both East and Middle Tennessee, said it best, "It is a matter of no reflection to a brave man to see a father, a son or a brother fall in the field of action. But it is a serious and melancholy incident to see a helpless woman or an innocent child tomahawked in their own house."

Even the Methodist Bishop Francis Asbury could resort to violence if the occasion demanded it. Once, after a threat of Indian attack, he was asked if he had felt his faith. He replied, "I felt for my gun."

The spring of 1788 had been a tense time on the frontier with the settlers witnessing time and time again the gruesome scenes of massacre, the Kirk family being but the latest.

Feelings against the Indians, as the perpetrators of such crimes, were at a feverous pitch. Seen against this backdrop of suffering and danger it becomes less difficult for us to understand the motives and forces that drove civilized men to behave like savages. James Hubbert, though the most famous, was but one of many Indian haters on the old Tennessee frontier.

Who can say that we, had we lived amidst the terrible events of 200 years ago, if we had seen our loved ones brutally and savagely murdered, would not have been an Indian-hater?

James Hubbert has not gone down in history as a civic leader. We can only speculate as to his exact role as such. However, while he cannot be considered in the same light as notables such as John Sevier, William Blount, and others, he did command sufficient respect and rank to be privy to the counsel of the great and near-great, to share in their lofty ambitions and to participate with them as equals in business deals. Hubbert had land grants in Washington and Greene counties that totaled over 5000 acres, and while these speculations are not on the level of those of John Sevier, Stokely Donelson, or William Blount, this was considerably more acreage than the average settler could afford.

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One example of the scale of his ambitions is his 1791 attempt to establish a settlement at Muscle Shoals in the Great Bend of the Tennessee River (now in Alabama). The land about the Shoals was valuable for the fertile soil and as a trading center leading to New Orleans, Mobile and the settlements in the lower Mississippi Valley.

As early as 1783 William Blount, John Sevier, Joseph Martin, Richard Caswell (later governor of North Carolina), John Donelson (founder of Nashville), and others formed a land company for the purpose of establishing a colony at Muscle Shoals. This attempt was at a standstill when the State of Franklin declared its independence from North Carolina in December, 1784. The area then became an object of interest for the new state which hoped to be able to expand its territory to include the Shoals. The long-cherished hopes of a settlement in the Great Bend also was a factor in the "Spanish Intrigue" played out between John Sevier of the State of Franklin and Gardoqui, the Spanish minister to this country.

We can speculate, but we cannot be sure, that James Hubbert may have been a party in these earlier attempts at settling Muscle Shoals, especially those involving Sevier and the State of Franklin. Zachariah Cox formed the Tennessee Company and in 1791 led an expedition of 15, which included Sevier Countians James Hubbert and Peter Bryan, to again try to establish a settlement at the Shoals. Perhaps Hubbert was chosen for his daring and for his Indian-fighting skills, for the venture was hazardous in the extreme. The Federal government, fearing the new settlement would incite the Indians to further violence, issued an order prohibiting the voyage. Undeterred by Federal prohibitions, the party embarked from the mouth of Dumplin Creek in Sevier County to begin their journey to the Shoals.

With a small boat, two canoes, and only 15 men, it was a precarious undertaking. Great caution was taken while passing through the "Narrows" where Col. Brown's company had been butchered in 1788 by "savage hordes." At the Old Fields, below the Suck, they were hailed by a party of Indians. Rifles ready, but under orders not to fire unless attacked, the white men went out to meet them. The Indians withdrew.

Rather than risk the hazards of the river at night, it was decided to steer to shore and make camp. But after spying the silhouettes of armed warriors standing around campfires for as far into the distance as they could see, the dangers of night navigation paled. These seasoned men of the frontier, inured to Indian dangers, spoke not a word and silenced their oar pins by pouring water over them. From the shore, barking dogs alerted the Indians to an alien presence. They rekindled their campfires and listened intently, but the canoes carrying the settlers glided silently by.

The next day the Indians, by various pretenses, attempted to lure them to shore. Only moments after they had refused an offer (made in English) to trade with three of the Indians, they were startled to see 300 warriors rise out of ambush. Fortunately, the voyagers were just beyond reach of the guns.

For three days and nights they were unable to make shore.

Once arrived at the Shoals, the party erected a block house and defense works on an island. The Glass and 60 warriors appeared shortly after and informed the party that if they did not peacefully and voluntarily withdraw, they would be put to death. After some discussion and consideration it was decided to abandon the fort. After their departure the Indians burned the fortifications and along with them the dreams of a settlement at Muscle Shoals.

We cannot help but wonder how James Hubbert took the defeat. Did he quietly acquiesce in the decision of the party to abandon the works, or did he argue vehemently against letting the Indians drive them from the land? Whatever his stand, we can imagine that for James Hubbert, at least, it must have been a galling defeat.

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Hubbert Family**

Though the Indians won this one, Zachariah Cox never quite gave up his dreams of a Muscle Shoals settlement, and he made later attempts to advance the idea.

Land speculation during frontier days has been compared to playing the stock market today. Many notables, such as John Sevier, William Blount, and Patrick Henry, were major investors in various enterprises. Deeds recorded from 1787 to 1795 show James Hubbert selling over 2500 acres of his French Broad land, including Hubbert's Island. Family researchers have theorized that he may have invested heavily in Cox's land company, possibly suffering heavy financial losses.

After the abortive Muscle Shoals attempt, James Hubbert once again settled into life on his French Broad plantation. His years here had witnessed many changes -- the birth, the struggle to exist, and finally the demise of the State of Franklin, and an influx of new settlers. North Carolina had finally, and this time irrevocably, ceded her western lands to the Federal government. In 1790 the area became the Territory of the United States South of the River Ohio, with William Blount as governor. In 1792 a newly-created Jefferson County took in what had been Sevier County, State of Franklin. James Hubbert had undoubtedly foreseen the establishment of the new county, and with it the necessity for those south of the French Broad to travel to its county seat at Dandridge. Hubbert's Ferry filled a need for a more convenient crossing for many of these travelers than did Stockton's and Evan's ferries located further down river. In February, 1792, just months before Jefferson County was established, Greene County granted Hubbert the privilege of operating a ferry on the French Broad River "near his own house." In 1793 the new Jefferson County granted him the right to this same ferry.

Though the years had brought civilization and government to the frontier, the danger of Indian attack remained a life-threatening reality for most of the settlers. Knoxville newspapers during the first half of the 1790's weekly carried stories of burning, looting and killing by the Indians. The KNOXVILLE GAZETTE on October 12, 1793 summarized a long, detailed account of recent plundering, ambushes, and massacres with these words:

"To report the numbers of small marauding parties that are frequently discovered on the frontiers would be too tedious and exceed the bounds of this paper. Suffice it to say, that no day passes without their being seen in some quarter or other..."

James Hubbert's name is often listed during this period as an officer of troops called out for the defense of the frontiers.

The May 5, 1792 KNOXVILLE GAZETTE reported an incident involving a Cherokee and four squaws who were passing near the house of Hubbert on the French Broad when two guns were discharged at them, slightly wounding the man. The newspaper went on to say that "This Hubbert is one of those people who went down the Tennessee last spring to attempt a settlement at the Muscle Shoals, and there are strong reasons to suspect that the guns were fired by his two sons, minors, who live with him."

Of his sons, at least James Hubbert, Jr. inherited the daring, bravado, and Indian-fighting skills of his father. A party of Indians went into Wears Cove May 5, 1794 and killed Peter Percefield. Nine days later, according to the KNOXVILLE GAZETTE, James Hubbert, Jr., Joseph Evans, Thomas Sellers, and Samuel Sellers, dressed and painted like Indians, set out to seek retribution for the killing. Coming upon a large encampment of warriors, young Hubbert and his party, under cover of darkness, crept into the camp and killed four of the Indians as they slept on the ground.

Just as a new day was dawning on the frontier, just as the pioneers had within their grasp all they had struggled and died to achieve, James Hubbert fades from the scene.

When did he leave Sevier County? Where did he go and why? Our chances to learn more about his time on the French Broad went up in the smoke of the Sevier County Courthouse fire in 1856.

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Hubbert Family**

James Hubbert was living here in 1795 when Governor William Blount appointed him as a second major in the Territorial militia and when in the same year he sold the last of his Jefferson County land. We know he had left the area by 1806, but the intervening years are a blank.

Hubbert researchers have previously interpreted an 1804 Jefferson County deed to mean that he was living in Sevier County at this time. But a reading of the deed reveals that although it was registered in 1804, it was actually for land sold in 1787. The deed is between James Hubbert, "Sevier County, and State of Franklin" and Hugh Berry of Caswell County, State of Franklin.

The last half of the 1790's saw the end of Indian warfare on the Tennessee frontier, and with peace came the need for men who would put down roots and turn the wilderness into scores of small, flourishing communities with schools, churches, farms, trades, and businesses. Perhaps pioneer, soldier, and Indian-fighter James Hubbert had little to contribute to these endeavors.

Perhaps Hubbert is not mentioned in area records between 1795-1806 simply because the county's records were destroyed. Or perhaps he was quietly living on the French Broad with no occasion for him to be mentioned in newspapers and records.

Trying to research James Hubbert's last years is as frustrating as working a jigsaw puzzle with several pieces missing. There are clues as to his whereabouts, but the scarcity of records in the period and the places in which he lived leaves us with more questions than answers.

In 1806 Thomas Lenoir kept a journal of a trip he made from North Carolina to Bedford County, Tennessee where he visited William Hubbert, a cousin of Col. James Hubbert. June 12, 1806, he wrote:

"William Duly [Dula] informed me that Col. Hubbards lived in the Natchee Country. I then went to William Hubbards who lives near the mouth of Bledsoes Creek who informed me the last account he had of Col. Hubbard he was in the Natchee Country Quarreling with the Spaniards & that he expects they have killed him [etc.]. W. Hubbard is a Cousin of Col. Hubbards and they have been in the habit of writing to each other. I therefore concluded that if Col. Hubbard was any where in this County or Country W. Hubbard certainly would know it."

D. R. Kennedy provides additional clues as to Hubbert's "Quarreling with the Spaniards." According to Kennedy's letters in the Draper Manuscripts, Hubbert, a man named House, and Russell Bean (son of William Bean and credited by some with being the first white child born to permanent settlers in the area that is now Tennessee) made a trip to New Orleans where they were caught breaking into a Spanish cathedral. Bean, "an uncommon man," swam Lake Ponchatrain and escaped. Hubbert and House were apprehended and put in prison in irons, where House subsequently died. Hubbert remained in prison until the Louisiana Territory was sold to the United States, at which time his son Ben petitioned the governor of the territory for his release, which was granted. Hubbert returned home after an absence of fifteen years, but his wife refused to live with him. Thus he came to live with his son Matthew about 1820 in Rhea County, Tennessee. This is where D. R. Kennedy had the opportunity to know him so well.

There have to be threads of truth in this story, but it must be remembered that Kennedy was writing sixty-odd years after Hubbert's death and undoubtedly some of the threads have been interwoven, unraveled, or stitches dropped. New Orleans became U.S. territory in 1804. Thus, if Hubbert was released at this time, the arrest would have had to take place prior to the transfer of the territory and was of rather short duration, and could not have been connected with his 15 year disappearance (1805-1820). There is, too, the possibility that it happened between 1805-1820, and if so, Kennedy may have confused the location. Perhaps it was Alabama or Florida Territory.

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Hubbert Family**

An interesting story that may, or may not, provide a clue to Hubbert's whereabouts is found in "Papers Relating to Zachariah Cox," by Isaac Cox.

In 1798 Zachariah Cox, with a company of men, descended the Mississippi River to explore the country west of the Mississippi and to investigate the possibility of commercial enterprises there. Brigadier General James Wilkinson, himself an unsavory character, sent word to New Orleans leaders that Cox was leading a group of brigands to pillage and plunder the Spanish citizens there. Under Wilkinson's orders, Cox was siezed in Natchez and held incommunicado. His captors refused to tell him the nature of the charges against him.

Feeling that he was being harrassed and fearing that he would not receive justice in Natchez, Cox escaped confinement and went to New Orleans. There he learned that his men in Natchez had been confined, many of them in irons. Outraged, he declared that the men were arrested merely to harrass him. Cox then made his way to Nashville and contacted authorities there, saying that by escaping from Natchez he wasn't trying to escape justice, but only the Natchez style.

Details are not known, but his men who had been jailed in Natchez were eventually released. There is no evidence that Hubbert was among these men, but this story is included here because of the many similarities to the Hubbert arrest story and because of the possibility that Hubbert was connected with Cox in this and other ventures. Perhaps one day Hubbert researchers may take this story and investigate it further. It is also notable that in 1785 two men by the surname of Bean accompanied Cox in exploring the Muscle Shoals area, thus showing an acquaintance between Cox and the Bean family.

In the 1820 Conecuh County, Alabama census is listed a James Hubbert over 21 years of age, with a female over 21, and a female under 21. Hubbert researchers have been unable to identify this James Hubbert and the possibility exists that our James Hubbert's mysterious disappearance could be attributed to his leaving Elizabeth for another woman.

Just as his origins and early life are a mystery to us, so are the events surrounding his last years. In all probability we shall never know the true circumstances. Was he on the Natchez "Quarreling with the Spaniards?" Did he spend the years in prison? Did he instead have a second family? Or is there another explanation that has eluded researchers?

A 1925 newspaper interview with a Sevier County man (not named), who was described as "beginning to bend under the weight of a great many years," recalled the tradition that Hubbert "mysteriously disappeared, but was later heard from in the wilderness of the west."

James Hubbert died February 7, 1824, and once again he does not disappoint us, for his death was as unusual and as dramatic as his life. D. R. Kennedy wrote that Hubbert left his son Matthew's in Rhea County to visit his son Ben in Warren County. While there he became ill and "went to a man that had drugs." In the proprietor's absence the wife dispensed the medicine, and through an unfortunate mistake she gave James Hubbert arsenic in the place of calomel.

Thus the old Colonel died, at age 82 "in his own bed and not by [the hands of] Indians" as might be supposed. * * * * *

I recently visited James Hubbert's old French Broad plantation. The land has seen changes, of course, but nothing of the magnitude as that which the future holds as the sprawl of "progress" and tourism reach out to destroy this haven of history. But for now it is still beautiful, serene, and pastoral. The placid French Broad River, a ribbon of silver and blue, flows onward to join with the Holston. The hot midday sun reflects in the water, blinding in its intensity. Across the river the eternal mountains tower in the distance. A red barn and twin silos nestle against the hills. Grazing cattle are dark dots on the rolling green plains.

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On the north side of the French Broad is the land where James Hubbert once worked, walked, lived, loved -- and hated. Hayfields cover the site where James and Elizabeth raised their children. Tractors effortlessly work the land Hubbert laboriously cleared with his bare hands and an ax. Families go about their daily lives with no need to post guards or look over their shoulders for lurking savages. A father can go to work with no worry that he will return to find his home burned and his family massacred. The river bank where Hubbert taught his small sons to fish is now a profusion of wildflowers -- red, purple, yellow, white, and gold. A half of a mile downstream from the old ferry a new, modern bridge transports travelers quickly and comfortably across the river that was such a hindrance to the early settlers.

People are the most important of God's creations. Yet James Hubbert is gone, and the river, the mountains, the land remain, holding fast to their secrets, refusing to share with us the scenes they witnessed 200 years ago. The little cemetery holds many such secrets and grudgingly consents to share a few --- C. Kerr died 1811.... Robert Kerr died 1819.... Allen S. Bryan died 1839... With only a simple, uninscribed fieldstone to mark her grave, Hubbert's daughter, Betty, rests beside her husband, Allen S. Bryan, Sr. It is here in the old burying ground that the spell of the past is strongest. I have become immersed in the lives and times of these people and the unfulfilled desire to know more about them is so intense it is a real and physical hunger.

As I drive down the road leading to Hubbert's old ferry, a rabbit darts in front of the car. A raccoon starts across the road but halts in surprise at the sight and sound of a car disturbing his peaceful domain. A hawk, startled by the unaccustomed noise, squawks complainingly and with a flap of his mighty wings, rises to glide majestically against the sky.

My thoughts turn to James Hubbert. With a heavy heart, I think of his years of restless wandering, his time of physical imprisonment, and worse, the lifetime of spiritual captivity as his soul was held fast by the bonds of bitterness and revenge.

I watch as the hawk soars higher and higher, beautiful and free. It is my fervent hope and prayer that somewhere the restless, troubled spirit that was James Hubbert has at last found the peace and freedom that eluded him on earth and somewhere in a boundless blue sky it soars as high, as unfettered, as the hawk.

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HUBBERT'S ISLAND

James Hubbert received a North Carolina land grant in 1784 for 600 acres of land on an island in the French Broad River. George Wilcockson also had a grant for a portion of this large mile-long island. In 1792 Hubbert sold his share to Samuel McSpadden. When Sevier County was created in 1794 the line dividing Sevier and Jefferson counties was described as "a direct line to the lower end of an island in the French Broad River, formerly known by the name of Hubbert's Island." The island was afterwards known by the name of its later owners, among them McSpadden, Evans, and Zimmerman.

Hubbert's Island was the site of a large Mississippian period Indian village (A.D. 1300-1600) and may have been the town of Chiaha or Olamico visited by the Spaniards Hernando DeSoto in 1540 and Juan Pardo in 1568. On the island was a large Indian mound described by those who remember it as "large enough to turn a hay wagon around on top."

Unfortunately, the island was covered by the waters of Douglas Lake in the early 1940's. Leonard Moore, who grew up in the area, says that only once in the forty-five years since the dam has the lake been low enough to allow a portion of the island to surface. The island is in Jefferson County, with the Sevier County line touching just the lower tip.

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HUBBERT'S FERRY

The only vestige of James Hubbert in Sevier County is the ferry he began in 1792. Sometime between 1813-1823 this ferry was taken over by Allen S. Bryan, Sr., husband of James Hubbert's daughter Betty. Bryans operated the ferry until about 1850-60 when it was sold to the Ellis family. A map drawn during the Civil War lists it as "Bryan's Ferry." After 1900 it became known as Kyker's Ferry and was operated under this name until it ceased operation after the building of Douglas Dam in the early 1940's.

HUBBERT'S FLAT LANDING

The only mention of Hubbert's Flat Landing is in a 27 Nov. 1793 land grant to Jane Calvert. The tract began at "a stake on the south bank of the French Broad River 15 poles above a white oak and bluff of rocks below Hubbart's flat landing, then west 210 poles to a beech on the east bank of Little Pidgeon River..." The Calvert land was on the south bank of the French Broad River and the Hubbert land on the north side.

The "flat landing" referred to in the grant was undoubtedly a landing for flat boats carrying goods down the French Broad River. This boat landing is possibly the same landing mentioned by Thomas F. Saffell (who later lived on the site) in his Civil War claim and described as being 300 yards from the Saffell home on the French Broad.

HUBBERT'S CAVE

North of the River historian, the late Aurelia Cate Dawson, wrote of Hubbert's Cave, where, as legend had it, the bones of many of Hubbert's Indian victims once rested. Listed on today's maps as Duncan Cave, at the turn of this century it was a favorite spot for school fieldtrips.

The June 14, 1925 Knoxville SENTINEL writes of a story "still told by a few of the older inhabitants of the section who willingly vouch for its truthfulness." Based on an interview with an unnamed man "beginning to bend under the weight of a great many years," the story tells of James Hubbert who often lured his Indian victims to the cave where he killed them and then hid the bodies in the cave. One is reminded of Daniel Kennedy's account of the "turkey gobbler" whose body Hubbert concealed. The article goes on to say that the cave is mentioned in an "early edition of Tennessee history, only one copy of which is now known to be in existence." At the time the article was written, all traces of the skeletons had long since vanished.

The Hubbert and related families genealogy will be printed in the next issue of the Smoky Mountain Historical Society NEWSLETTER. Though not a Hubbert descendant, I am very interested in this family and will willingly exchange information. Cherel B. Henderson, 6120 Babelay Rd., Knoxville, TN 37924.

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GENEALOGICAL EXCHANGE DIRECTORY

The East Tennessee Historical Society is compiling a GENEALOGICAL AND HISTORICAL DIRECTORY to be published in 1988. As an affiliate society of ETHS, Smoky Mountain Historical Society members are eligible to contribute to this exchange directory. Mailed the completed form on the next page to the East Tennessee Historical Society, 500 W. Church, Knoxville, TN 37902.